

What is claimed is:

1. A method for server side insertion of content into streaming media including the steps of
 - 5 providing a streaming server,
associating an insertion plugin with the streaming server,
generating a command which includes indicia for locating content desired by a user and indicia for locating a source for content to be inserted, and
substituting, in response to a signal associated with the content desired by the
10 user, packets of content to be inserted for packets of the content desired by the user.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the generated command further including indicia reflective of the user.
- 15 3. A method for matching the timing of content inserted into a data stream with breaks in the data stream comprising
 - prefetching the content to be inserted into the data stream,
storing the prefetched content on a local server,
identifying a starting point for a break in the data stream,
20 establishing an offset between the starting point of the break and an initial packet of the prefetched content,
removing from the data stream packets representative of the break,
inserting the prefetched packets into the data stream,
adjusting the time of at least one inserted packet to match the time of at least
25 one removed packet.
4. The method of claim 3 further including adjusting the time of a plurality of inserted packets to match the time of a plurality of removed packets.
- 30 5. The method of claim 3 wherein the data stream is a live broadcast.
6. The method of claim 3 wherein the data stream is an on demand broadcast.
7. The method of claim 1 wherein the location of the content is identified by a
35 URL.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the location of the content desired by the user is defined by a network address.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the location of the content is identified by an XML playlist.

10. A system for inserting content into streaming media comprising
a streaming server for receiving content in the form of streaming media and passing it to a client,
an insertion plugin associated with the streaming server for redirecting the streaming media and capable of recognizing an impending break in a media stream,
a source of content to be inserted proximate to the streaming server,
a decision server responsive to the impending break in the media stream for directing the insertion of content into the media stream for substantially the duration of the break.

11. The system of claim 10 further including a counter for identifying the number of times a universe of users sees a particular item of inserted content.